

Reverend James A. Aloupis (cassette)

FATHER GEORGE: Father James Aloupis, the pastor of Saint Nicholas in Newark, with Peter [Marquez] and Kiki Lambrose, and me, Father George, in attendance.

PETER MARQUEZ: OK, Father. Tell me something, Father: when did your family come to the United States, who were they, where did they settle, and for what villages in Greece did they migrate from?

FATHER ALOUPIS: All right. Both Mom and Dad came at the turn of the century. They settled first in Massachusetts; my birthplace was Lynn, Massachusetts. And their village in Greece was (inaudible), [Spati], and we are thankful for the gift of a mom and dad, like your parents, not to bring sadness, I remember these parents, I remember these parents, and even prayerfully, we remember these parents like family. Have we come to the next question?

PETER MARQUEZ: Father, what was your education, and when did you graduate from Holy Cross, with your university first?

FATHER ALOUPIS: All right. When you were up in Heaven, all of you -- (laughter)

PETER MARQUEZ: (laughter) I don't think so.

KIKI LAMBROSE: I don't think so either.

PETER MARQUEZ: -- we were in Massachusetts for grammar school, for high school, Marlboro, Mass. I had my bachelor's work, my four years at Bates, Lewiston, Maine. And then would you believe five years at the seminary in Palmford, Connecticut. I guess you would say strictly New England education, where they say "pahk the cah" and many other things. (laughter) And then we were graduated in the third year of the seminary. In other words, the seminary was founded in '37, the first graduating class, five years, '42. I was in the class of '44, the third class. '44.

FATHER GEORGE: Of the originally (laughter), is that right?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes. Yes, yes.

PETER MARQUEZ: And when, Father, did you arrive at Saint Nicholas?

FATHER ALOUPIS: The blessing of that day in my life, and we were honored to have another anniversary this past September 19th, arriving in '54, coming into '99, four and five. And then you wonder, you think about the Fiddler on the Roof, sunrise, sunset.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Not yet, Father.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Where did they go by? With my little angels. (laughter)

FATHER GEORGE: And, Father, what were your impressions of Newark and its people as you found them when you came in 1954?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Absolutely beautiful. I felt so blessed and honored to be part of this special parish, and to be with Father [Spidivakis] all these years, a total -- well, he came in about 1916, '17. The horizon brought Father here, and it's something that this parish has had two priests all of these years. Let me tell you recently, we had a wedding here; there were guests from California, very impressed here with everything. They came up to me at the end of the sacrament, "Father, you've been here all of these years?" I said, "Yes, and you know, they're still putting up with me." And she said, "Do you know that the number of years you've been here, we've had nine priests in our parish."

KIKI LAMBROSE: That happens, Father.

FATHER ALOUPIS: What can you do in a year or two? I'm going on 45, and I said, I'm still getting acquainted with my people, even with the gleam in their eyes, and the happy smiles.

FATHER GEORGE: Father, knowing that Father Spidivakis had more or less handpicked you and knew of you and knew how wonderful you were, and knew that you would do great in the community,

did he ever interfere when you became pastor, or did he just help you?

FATHER ALOUPIS: In all sincerity, Father Spidivakis was like a second father, and this is the truth. You know when I came, I would hear this and that and this about Father. My first Sunday, September 19th, my little angels up in heaven, 1954, my first sermon, Father Spidivakis on my right, [Dmitri Kriona] upstairs, we had a Mrs. [Matiaki] at the organ -- you wouldn't remember, but they were here.

FATHER GEORGE: I remember.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And then looking at the people with all my love, I told them, "I am so privileged and honored to be at this parish," and I said, "Above all, our love and respect for Father Spidivakis, my first (inaudible), our hearts will always be open. Our doors will be open. The love of Saint Nicholas will always embrace him." So, truthfully, we had such a relationship that nobody would believe it. "With Father Spidivakis?" I said, "Yes. With Father Spidivakis." And not that I was playing humble, I believed in what I said. And then not selfishly, but I did say to myself, whenever the time comes, whenever he wishes, for my exit, hopefully not a permanent one yet -- (laughter)

KIKI LAMBROSE: (laughter) No.

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- that whoever might come might feel the same way. Now, if that's being selfish, I'm selfish. Put me in the corner and spank me. But with Father Spidivakis, I'm repeating, there couldn't have been a more wonderful, respectful, supportive relationship. I know it surprised many people, but we had it.

FATHER GEORGE: I believe it. And that's why Father covered for you so many times when you were made the director of [Goya] by his Eminence, Archbishop [Yakouvis]. So he was able to cover for you while you were traveling around the country trying to organize Goya. Yes. So something that you don't know, that the parish of Saint Nicholas here in Newark was very instrumental in the organization of Goya nationally through Father Aloupis.

FATHER ALOUPIS: It was all of us together.

FATHER GEORGE: OK. Now, on the basis of the recollection of the older members of the community, when you arrived at Saint Nicholas, what did they tell you about the earliest date that they could remember about Saint Nicholas existing in Newark? And I'm talking about the [mopolis] who was here very earlier, (inaudible) that was here very early, and some of the others that you met that were here before the incorporation, official incorporation of the parish.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Actually, what I did here, of course I would listen when they spoke, but in time, I got to know that Father Peter Kostakos, who was very well versed in these years, with the remarkable memory, so he was an advisor, a friend, a confidante. And also with the Gellis family, especially Joanna, gifted with the memory, and helping and helping. So my reliance was more on their hearsay and what they had. And then if you remember, we had the late Michael Pappas from Elizabeth. Michael made a very special study, interviewing many people of then. And he was first to write his first historical document about Saint Nicholas. And then in time, we had others who came, and finding this and checking that and asking other people. So I would say that my recollection was one of memory of other dear people.

FATHER GEORGE: Right, of course. But at least you knew them, and you were able to talk with them. Was it [Galinopolis] who had stated that even before the date that the patriarch had of 1901, I think, that the church had been -- that Saint Nicholas had been a functioning church in 1901, and that's from the record of the patriarchy, which I hope we can get, that according to Galinopolis, specifically, who had an excellent memory, it was -- he said that the church had been functioning even much earlier than that.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes.

FATHER GEORGE: And I think that, David, I remember him saying something, and I'm talking as a little kid, and I can't remember as well as you can remember, was like in 1895 that the church was really functioning, even though it was not officially incorporated. Do you remember anything like that?

FATHER ALOUPIS: What I remember is this, and this came from Father [Constantinos], a very -- an eminent scholar whom I respect so much. In his files, and then from the ecumenical patriarchy, he had the wording, and the wording was something like this: the year, 1901, the written word. In Newark, USA, we have a thriving, well-organized parish, Saint Nicholas, in Newark, New Jersey. So if a parish is thriving and organized, and especially those years, when they were so busy making a living, of course you go back before then. The exact date, I cannot tell you. But logically, it's before then, because when you get this statement, Peter, and I gave it to your father, that 1901, you have a well-established parish, it's really something. And we are very thankful, even though technically, officially, we are known as the mother church of New Jersey, and that we are number six in the western hemisphere. Maybe

it should be before six. This -- we'll try somehow to find out.

FATHER GEORGE: On the basis of the above information, and before incorporation -- I think you answered this, what year would you estimate that Saint Nicholas started to function?
Sometime before 1901.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes.

FATHER GEORGE: OK. Before 1901.

KIKI LAMBROSE: I think Father [Kostapolis] mentioned --

FATHER GEORGE: Do you recall -- what do you recall were the numbers of our then Greek school, Sunday school choir, [philotarose] et cetera, when you came to Saint Nicholas?

FATHER ALOUPIS: When we arrived at Saint Nicholas, yes, I am happy to tell you, we had 323 Sunday school --

FATHER GEORGE: (inaudible) exact --

FATHER ALOUPIS: I remember that.

FATHER GEORGE: Yes, official, always remember that.

FATHER ALOUPIS: I'll never forget that, thanks to the teachers. And again, especially thanks to Joanna [Geller]. And the Greek school, very thriving for Greek schools, because earlier, Father Spidivakis and [presbytera] with the teachers, with other helpers. And I often hear the

gratitude of so many of our people who attended Greek school. Probably at the time of their attendance, they didn't quite appreciate it. But in time, in time, the appreciation blossomed like a beautiful flower. The choir, always outstanding, with Dmitri (inaudible).

KIKI LAMBROSE: Oh, he's wonderful.

FATHER ALOUPIS: With Ana. Now, you correct me, we also had [Kalash], who used to be here.

FATHER GEORGE: Yes, I remember him.

FATHER ALOUPIS: The Russian composer.

FATHER GEORGE: The Russian Jewish composer.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And we offer some of his works, even (inaudible).

KIKI LAMBROSE: His music, definitely, yes. Right, exactly.

FATHER ALOUPIS: It's Kalash. And many parishes now in America --

PETER MARQUEZ: Use it.

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- are using Kalash. And then we had Arnold, Jack Arnold, for bass.

KIKI LAMBROSE: That's right, I remember Jack Arnold. I remember him. That's right.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And we repeated Mrs. Matiaki at the organ, very beautiful. So the choir was really something. And to add to this, we had the Metropolitan star, we had [Muskona], who would come here especially on Saint Nicholas, his name was Nicholas Muskona, Metropolitan Opera. And he would read the epistle, the (inaudible), on his name day. So the choir --

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

FATHER ALOUPIS: Thanks to all of you. Outstanding. [Filoptohus], let's talk about Filoptohus. The name, [Minnie Zois]. Minnie Zois with Father Spidivakis. Let's assume it was earlier, but let's say 1918, Father Spidivakis. About four months later after his arrival, little Minnie Zois approaches Father. "Father, (inaudible)." We must have a Sunday school. They inaugurated the Sunday school in 1918. A couple of months later, Minnie Zois, "Father Spidivakis, (inaudible)." So, before Filoptohus, much before, Minnie Zois had formed at Saint Nicholas [Epronia], we who support, who are concerned, to help. Your first Filoptohus at Saint Nicholas was much before the founding of (inaudible).

PETER MARQUEZ: That's interesting.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And titled Epronias, directed by, founded by, Minnie Zois, Sunday school Filotophus. And then her poetical expressions.

FATHER GEORGE: Tell me, Father, how full was Saint Nicholas on any given Sunday during the year? And I remember, but let me hear it from you.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Oh, yes. Yes. It was a full house, which probably without playing cards, we had -- (laughter).

FATHER GEORGE: Father, that's probably why we never had Sunday school come back upstairs after the (inaudible), because there was really no room for that. And that's why Father Spidivakis, at the (inaudible) downstairs. Because there was -- people ask me, see, they used to do it that way, too, but they did it out of necessity. Today, we can do it differently.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes. But then, thank God, and you've seen the pictures of the Greek schools, even the Greek schools, way, way back. And it's really something. And I'm glad you used the phrase, there was no room at Saint Nicholas. Like there was no room at the inn for our Lord. That's why we had people stacked in the aisles. Are we having a little problem there? Anything wrong?

KIKI LAMBROSE: It's all right, we've got --

FATHER GEORGE: Yeah, that baby's working.

PETER MARQUEZ: This is going well.

FATHER ALOUPIS: All righty.

FATHER GEORGE: OK. Father, what was the ratio of American Greeks to Greek-born Greeks on this post-war parish council, and what was the interaction between when you first came, because at that point, it was when the Newark people started to take over, they went through the colleges, and the Greek Americans started to come into the council.

FATHER ALOUPIS: What was the ratio of the American Greeks?

FATHER GEORGE: What do you think it was? You know, two to one --

FATHER ALOUPIS: I would say here, for this question, that normally, things being equal, that at that time, we had more Greek-born, Greece-born Greeks, than we had American, at that time, the early years. But I believe that the interaction was one of respect and support, one trying to help the other. For example, when we think of neighbors, years ago, you don't have to go far. Take Newark. The Greek community, at that time, you were all together, in that sense, or most of you were together, trying to earn your living, support a family, go to school, loving to come to Greek school, how much they enjoyed that. And everything combined, I would say that the interaction was a favorable

one. Perhaps in other parishes, mostly when our dear ones would bring their political views from Greece into America, and then they would use words like (inaudible Greek), whatever, whatever. And we were gifted in that sense, to use the word gifted, that we were always politically minded, even in America, which is good, and it's also bad, depending on how we take it and what we do with it. But I would say that now, coming to the now, and with a new Archbishop, and with everything going on. For example, I'll cite one example: until now, according to the nationalities, the minorities, all right, when it came to education, we had been number two. Number one, our Jewish friends. Now, I'm very happy to tell you, because whenever you ask any of the young people, "Oh, I'll be a senior in high school," and then I say, "And I hope you'll be going to college," "Oh, yes. Definitely." Would you believe we are now number one in education? And our Jewish friends, number two. In terms of wealth, the dollar sign, Forbes magazine, we are within the first six categories, a close number two. So you give our people credit. So many of them are CEOs, chief executive officer, of the biggest corporations. So very, very gifted, talented. For example, in California, right, we have --

FATHER GEORGE: (inaudible) isn't it? [Spanos]?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yeah. Alex Spanos. Alex had an idea and a dream. He came from a poor family, but a dignified family. Poor in the sense of dollars, but dignity that no dollars could buy. Someday I want to have a football team. Now, listen to this dream. The day came. He has his own football team. We have the other one, Athen, in Baltimore, Maryland. I want to have my own football team, or whatever. I admire that.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Education is very important --

FATHER ALOUPIS: And then they tried to do it in an honorable way, upright.

KIKI LAMBROSE: But I think for the immigrant parents, education is very important for their children, so that their children could progress.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Absolutely. Well said. Because they had felt deprived, and it hurt them, it really bothered them that we couldn't have, but what I didn't have, (inaudible) --

PETER MARQUEZ: So let me add, Father, because I have found that that is true with, even today, with a lot of the immigration that occurs in the United States. For example, right here in Newark, the Portuguese people. They're very hardworking people that migrated, their family, churchgoers, and the

first thing they want is to see that their children get a good education. So I think that it's not only, and I know you would agree with me, it's not only in our ethnic group, but the Italians, the Polish, the Cubans. I mean, America is so beautiful that I really find that most of the time people who are hardworking, and come from a foreign land and come to the US, that they want the best for their children.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And their family was very special.

FATHER GEORGE: And Peter, there's more than that. You know, we have roots in this longing for an education, but we were deprived of it while under Turkish rule.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Oh, that's right.

FATHER GEORGE: And that's why we had, thanks to the monasteries, probably the only time I thank the monasteries, is that they kept the Greek language and education alive. And because of that, this was instilled in us, and as little kids, we learned the poem, (inaudible), which had to do with going to school at night. And so when we balk at going to Greek school as kids, our parents used to say, "Look, during the Turkish occupation, they went in the middle of the night." So we do have a historical basis for education.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes, absolutely. And it's so commendable that what I didn't have, my child will have it. All you

have to do, not for sadness, remember Dad, how he worked?
Peter remembers his dad? They worked. Honorably,
beautifully, just commendably.

KIKI LAMBROSE: They had tremendous integrity.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes. Yes.

FATHER GEORGE: Father, we all know the -- historically, the
conflict between the use of English and Greek in church.
When did Greek versus English start to become an issue in
your time, and how did you handle this? Understanding that
even during Father Spidivakis time, about 1948, the issue
was already become a (inaudible), Greek-born against
American-born.

FATHER ALOUPIS: All righty. This issue, and let's say, for
example, how did we handle this? Well, maybe I was lucky.
Languages are very easy for me. I'm grateful, I'm thankful.
And even for my first parish, a long time ago, my very first
parish, West Virginia, I had a wonderful young couple coming
for my second wedding, as the young priest in West Virginia.
My first wedding, there was no problem. The boy was Greek,
the (inaudible) was Greek. But even then, I asked them, the
first couple, "Any of your guests who are going to come, do
they know Greek? Do they know English, or any other
language?" Now, they're looking at me, as though, what

happened to Father, with such a question? But I had my purpose. I wanted communication to be alive, from them. And then they told me, "Oh, Father, we have some friends, and they're not Greek." So immediately, I said, "But I'm sure they're very dear people, wonderful people." Because I didn't want them to think that only (inaudible) -- no, you have other wonderful people. From then, I felt very strongly about this. The dignity, the dignity of every person. Today I had this young couple, and you had to wait, and I'm sorry, but there was an emergency. The young lady is not Greek, but she's a wonderful person, the (inaudible). The young man, maybe you know the family, [Fokas]?

FATHER GEORGE: Yes.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes. Peter, right? Well, I wanted the young lady to know that we respect her dignity, the person that she is. And we left in a very, very happy, beautiful way. Now, coming to West Virginia, my second wedding coming. The first was no problem, but I did have it in Greek and English, (inaudible).

PETER MARQUEZ: 1944, that will put it in perspective.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes. The first wedding, I can tell you, was the first week of October, '54.

FATHER GEORGE: OK, you're talking about Saint Nicholas, now. But you said Virginia.

FATHER ALOUPIS: I'm talking now about my West Virginia (inaudible).

KIKI LAMBROSE: OK, West Virginia.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Clarksburg, West Virginia.

FATHER GEORGE: Right. And that was in 1944.

FATHER ALOUPIS: 1944. Now, my second wedding is right before Thanksgiving, November. (inaudible), a Greek boy. [Danifi], Italian. But a very well-to-do Italian family, with friends in Washington, Congressmen, Senators, whatever, judges. This type of a family.

KIKI LAMBROSE: You were in your element, Father. (laughter)

FATHER ALOUPIS: We're meeting, all right. I get a feeling that the young lady either wants to tell me something or to ask me something. I got a feeling. But I would not pressure that at first. They were coming, togetherness, still nothing from the bride. We have one more session before the wedding. So, we finished. I looked at her with all my love, and I said, "Is there anything you would like to ask me or tell me?" Then she opened up. "Father, (inaudible). I have a problem. I'm worrying." "You have a problem? You're worrying? You should be the happiest

butterfly." "You know, Father," and she was so serious -- she knew the word for [Yaya], I've told you this, she knew the word for Yaya -- "Father, my Yaya's coming from Rome." "Isn't that beautiful?" "But, Father, she doesn't know Greek." (laughter) Now, listen to this. I said, "Is this why you've been worrying, and you've never told me?" Now, what prompted me, I'll never know --

KIKI LAMBROSE: The feeling that you had.

FATHER ALOUPIS: I find myself as though I'm hearing somebody else. "Don't worry. I'll have two prayers in Italian." "You will, Father? You're very special." I thought now that I was hearing somebody else talking. Well, the Sunday came. Well, I did my homework.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Of course.

FATHER ALOUPIS: I did my homework, phonetics and everything. Sunday, the big wedding. All from Washington, judges. They were both well-to-do families. (inaudible). Now, I said to myself, I'm going to try to catch Yaya's eyes, and I'm going to smile to see if she'll smile back. Guests, finally, Yaya walks in. You know these -- how can I tell you? -- she didn't have to tell you that she was somebody.

KIKI LAMBROSE: She carried herself, (inaudible).

FATHER ALOUPIS: Tall. The hairdos, the Italian style, the beautiful gown. I even remember, a green gown. I do. I'll never forget it. She comes in. You know, not overdone, but you know, this is somebody.

KIKI LAMBROSE: A grand lady.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Now, I'm in the altar. They're moving; I want to catch her eyes. Especially then, you want to please everybody. Finally, our eyes. I smiled. She smiled back. I said, "Thank you, (inaudible)." And we started. English and Greek, maybe a little more English than with all of the people. We finish. The time came now, the memorable moment. I turned facing the people, and I find myself saying, "I'm about to do something. I'm going to make a million mistakes, but don't look at my mistakes. Look at what I'm trying to do." Do you know, I got everybody's attention, and I was wondering, (inaudible), what happened to that priest, there's something wrong. Well, I started. Apparently, I didn't do badly, because I finished the first prayer, I started the second. Before finishing the second, Yaya -- now, I have my vestments on, (inaudible), Yaya jumps up like a little girl, and she comes up to me. Now, listen to this, I'll never forget this. She hugs me, and she says two words. "[Mille gratzia]." (inaudible) Well, when I

heard this, I made a promise. If it takes five languages, we will speak in five languages, to communicate, to reach the people. So I owed that to my second wedding. So do we have problems, personally? No, I have never had a problem with language. But unfortunately, I'm not being critical, many of our clergy have had problems. They make such a big issue out of something that could be beautiful. Maybe I make it easy, I don't know.

PETER MARQUEZ: Well, Father, let me ask you this. So far as the future of Orthodoxy, we must have a bilingual church, or else our church in America is not going to exist.

FATHER GEORGE: Peter, it's even gotten beyond that point. 75% of our churches right now in the United States use no Greek. None. You won't even hear [Calimera]. Because the composition of those parishes, in many of those parishes, are not Greek. They're Greeks that started the parish, but through intermarriage and through other ethnic Orthodox people, they are such a mixture that you'll hear very little if any Greek.

PETER MARQUEZ: Well, I don't want to get into a debate, I don't agree with that.

FATHER GEORGE: No, this is not a debate. This is a fact. I can refer you to the Archdiocese that will tell you the same

thing. Father, describe the clergy around us, at the beginning of your assignment to Saint Nicholas, like Father Vasilio, [Cordoleron, Papanikolakis], Kostakos, et cetera. Can you tell us a little bit about those clergymen?

FATHER ALOUPIS: In describing the clergy? What type of a description?

FATHER GEORGE: In other words, their personalities, and your relationship with them?

FATHER ALOUPIS: OK. Well, again, I am happy to tell you that I happen to be a believer of being a good neighbor. And that has been very helpful in my priesthood. Without looking far, our immediate neighborhood, we are family. Right across the street, when we were gifted with a parking lot, I went around the neighborhood, I didn't miss anybody, and I would tell them with a smile, "Our parking lot is our parking lot. Whenever you need it, don't even call. If there's anything going on, a big service, let us know the night before or the day before, so we'll have everything ready." They come, the students. No payment, as you know. We tell them, "Please respect the ground." This has turned out to be one of our biggest blessings, being a good neighbor, and being more than a good neighbor with our Greek churches, our neighbors. Now, if I were to tell you

something, it's not a critical (inaudible), and I don't want you to take it as such. Just take it as an event. 1954, a little after September 19. Our first parish council meeting. I've been debating if I should say this; I think I will. I know with whom I'm talking. But take it only as an event, nothing more. Our first parish council meeting. I'm excited, I'm happy, I'm delighted, everything. And now, I hear people telling me, my parish council, "Father, we are at Saint Nicholas. You have nothing to do with Saint Demetrius." So I'm listening, and at first, I thought they were just teasing. No, they were quite serious. And this and that. So when they finished, I looked at them with all of my love, and I said something that I don't know if I should have said. I said, (Greek), you're wonderful (inaudible). (Greek). Then I added, I thought, (Greek). I tried to make a little distinction between (inaudible) -- they looked at me. I guess they didn't expect me to say anything, or just to say, "Oh, yes." And then I added, "If you really believe that, I'm not for Saint Nicholas. I've been another way all my life. Don't tell me to do this and not to do that. I'm not a rebel, but I believe in being a good neighbor." And then I added, I added, (Greek). They're looking at me, all right. So we started, we continued here. We were taken downtown to the old First

Church. We were taken to all the churches, Second Presbyterian, all of them, all of them, [Petty] Memorial, Trinity Cathedral. And this came easy, because this is what I had done all my life with my parishes. Very involved. Would you believe that about a year later, the same members of the parish council, (Greek), with the relationships with Father [Portoleon]. Not to make it impressive, 30 years together, we never had one misunderstanding. And you're talking about two Greek Orthodox churches, where then very frequently I would walk from here to Saint Demetrius, eight minutes flat. Not running, walking. We were so close. We never had a misunderstanding. Now, maybe this is hard to believe; he knows that it's the truth.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Knowing you, it's not hard. (laughter)

FATHER GEORGE: It's not, at all.

FATHER ALOUPIS: We didn't have time, (Greek). We had things to do.

PETER MARQUEZ: And he was a great person, Father [Portoleon].

FATHER ALOUPIS: And I'm thankful that even until today, we're still running around. Maybe slower now, but we're running around. (laughter)

KIKI LAMBROSE: I remember -- who was your rabbi friend? And we did dances --

FATHER ALOUPIS: You remember Rabbi [Solfis]?

KIKI LAMBROSE: I do remember Rabbi Solfis, exactly. That's who I remember.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Beautiful (inaudible).

KIKI LAMBROSE: Yes.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Beautiful people.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Exchanges between the two communities.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Not only that, but even going to Israel, even where he introduced us to the mayor of Jerusalem, 28 years, Teddy [Korek]. Whenever we would go, Teddy Korek would throw a big reception for Rabbi Solfis. We're very thankful people. I'm so grateful, so thankful.

KIKI LAMBROSE: I also remember Mayor Dunn, you were very good friends with him, too? Elizabeth, Mayor Dunn of Elizabeth?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Oh, yes. Yes. You remember Mayor Dunn?

PETER MARQUEZ: I remember we went and met him for the Junior Olympics that time, to refresh your memory, that used to be held in (inaudible), and I was one of the co-chairmen of the Olympics, and we had a final occasion. I gave you a call, Father, and I said, "Father, can you help us out?" He said, "What, Peter?" I said, "We'd like to get into Elizabeth." You said, "Well, I know someone there. We've met with Mayor

Dunn." I remember that day very, very -- it was [Gus, the Hillmans], myself, Father (inaudible), and Tom Dunn.

FATHER ALOUPIS: You know, on that tangent, we're talking family. We arrived at Saint Nicholas, not that I was going to play politics, I have never played politics. I go as Father Aloupis. You're a Democrat; I'm happy for you. You're a Republican; I'm happy for you. I'm Father Aloupis. All right? Now, too many days did not go by. Now, you wouldn't remember all this, maybe. Mayor Leo [Carlin], the Mayor of --

FATHER GEORGE: Yes, I remember him.

FATHER ALOUPIS: The mayor of Newark, Leo Carlin. So, I called up from here, speaking to his secretary. "I will be honored, I'm the newly-arrived one, and I'm anxious to meet our mayor." And she said, "Father, you sound very happy and determined." I said, "I am, both -- I want to meet him." So we made an appointment, I went. Now, they were waiting to see an entourage of others coming with me. And I detected that. I said, "No," I said, "I'm all alone." Surprise. Mayor Leo Carlin. He also thinks I have people coming. I said, "No, I'm all alone." Surprised. We sat down --

END OF SIDE A

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- as we sat down with Mayor Carlin, as I'm serving, where I came from, my relationships with other mayors from my previous parishes, my concern. And I told him, I am here because I'm very concerned about our city, our county, our state. Now he's looking at me. I said I'm very concerned; that's why I'm here. And I said, if it at any time the local probation office might have a little whatever with any of our Greek children, I said, would you please notify me before anything is done? Call Father Aloupis at Saint Nicholas. So we spoke, very nice. I have to say, he was a gentleman, everything beautiful. When I got to leave, he got up, he embraced me respectfully, and he said something like this: "If I had more clergy like you're feeling, we wouldn't have many problems here." And I said, "Mayor, this is the way I feel. And I didn't want to come with anybody else. I wanted you to see me, and I wanted to see you." Would you believe we formed an unbelievable friendship? I didn't go demanding; I requested. And that was one. And then we had the county executive, like we've had Jim, and the same thing. Appointment, my concern for the county. Now, we come to Trenton. Now, if you remember,

Robert Minor, governor of New Jersey. My appointment, following through same thing, but they were all so surprised. They'd even tell me, "We've never had an appointment like this before." I said, "I'm just concerned, and I want you to know it. And I'm ready to help, wherever, whatever." Would you believe that Robert Minor (inaudible) -- this was the end of '54. That following January was the inauguration, and before the inauguration, I got another beautiful letter, a personal letter from Governor Minor. "Please come for one of the inaugural prayers." I was honored; I was delighted (inaudible). Not playing politics. The Greek Orthodox Church. And since then, to make it Greek, for Governor Minor, every governor, including Whitman, the interfaith service at the basilica.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Right, I remember.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And we were there because he invited, because when you're concerned, and you go not demanding, people appreciate it. And even here, this is a reflection of appreciation. We did something and we were helpful for the university. Not that I did it, but we helped. We even had gone to Washington, the congressional hearings.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Father, we don't know these things about you. But we have to know --

FATHER ALOUPIS: (inaudible)

KIKI LAMBROSE: Father, we have to know these things. What else were you involved with in the overall community?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Interfaith work. Still active with that.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Weren't you involved with the Boys and Girls Club in Newark, too?

FATHER ALOUPIS: With David Warner and Mike -- oh, (inaudible) -- Michael, who was the --

PETER MARQUEZ: Did it start with a G?

KIKI LAMBROSE: [Gargis].

FATHER ALOUPIS: Gargis.

PETER MARQUEZ: Sure.

FATHER GEORGE: Father --

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yeah. And David Warner, a lot of things.

KIKI LAMBROSE: But father, we have to know this.

FATHER GEORGE: Father, in the same vein, how about telling us the story when the Pope came here, and when you first met this Pope?

FATHER ALOUPIS: But I'm taking up your time.

PETER MARQUEZ: No. Please.

FATHER GEORGE: This is what we have to know.

KIKI LAMBROSE: This is why we're here.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Well, this was one of the highlights. My hospital visitations. Almost anywhere, everywhere. One day, I'm visiting [Pasaic], the hospitals. I had finished with Pasaic General, and I said, I have a few minutes, let me go to Saint Mary's Hospital, Pasaic I go. There, Father remembers, the director, she reminded me of Mother Teresa. This is Mother Immaculata. Immaculata. She had taken a liking to me.

KIKI LAMBROSE: I wonder why. (laughter)

FATHER ALOUPIS: So I go in there now, in the information area. She spots me way down in the corridor, and she starts running. Now, I thought something was wrong. She takes me by the hand, like it's really, like you see in the (inaudible), and now she's telling me, "We have a distinguished visitor, and I want you to meet him." I said, "I would be honored. I would be pleased." And as we're going, I see a very dignified person, and he's dressed like -- you remember.

PETER MARQUEZ: In red. He's a cardinal.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes, a cardinal. I recognized him. So I went up to him -- very unusual face. He looked at me -- I smiled, looking at him right in the eyes, smiling. He asks

in Polish, "Mother Immaculata, is he one of ours?" I picked it up. And before she answered, I said -- he's not asking me, but before she answered, "Oh, yes. (inaudible)." When I said (inaudible), do you know who was (inaudible)?

KIKI LAMBROSE: The Pope?

FATHER ALOUPIS: He was then the cardinal of Poland --

FATHER GEORGE: (inaudible)

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- who is now the Pope. And then I saw him again, more recently, at the basilica, when Archbishop [Yakouvis] was at the airport to meet the Pope coming with [Alitalia] -- well, I had been invited, interfaith, to be at the basilica, so I went.

PETER MARQUEZ: Did that surprise Yakouvis?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Very close. There we were. And, I'm telling the high Monsignors on my list --

PETER MARQUEZ: In fact, wasn't it the high Monsignors that took you among them? The Monsignors took you there, right? As their guest, am I correct?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Now, I'm looking at the man in front of us, and I tell the Monsignor, the high Monsignor, I said, "You know, he reminds me of Bob Hope." Well, it was Bob Hope.
(laughter)

PETER MARQUEZ: (laughter) That's right, I remember the story.

FATHER ALOUPIS: He came from California to the Pope. Now, when we finished, I thought we were going to leave. And then I caught a little message: "Please stay for a special reception. You are invited." I don't know how, but I was invited. Now, there's the line. Mrs. Hope, Bob's wife -- (inaudible) just to say this, the reception, so we went over. And you know, usually the Monsignors and all, so uptight. Well, I took my time. I came to Bob Hope -- now, you know, they're all waiting in line, and I said, "Bob," I said, "I thought that the fountain of youth was in Florida. But it's in California." He hugs me, "Boy, I'm taking you with me." Now, we come up to the Pope. He sees a million people a week. But I mention the incident, how he came to visit relatives who were sick at Saint Mary's, and I had the honor of meeting him. Now, listen to this diplomacy. "Oh, yes. I remember." And I thought of that movie with Maurice [Evalier] --

PETER MARQUEZ: I remember it well.

FATHER ALOUPIS: "Oh, I remember it," and he said, "No, you don't." (laughter) Anyway, we're thankful for all of these things. Very grateful." (laughter)

PETER MARQUEZ: Now, we're going to lump the next three questions together, because they're really intertwined. I want to ask you your recollection, and the humorous things, because, let's face it, our history here is going to be -- you know, we want to keep it on a kind of humanistic plane. So the next three questions are kind of that way. Who were the most colorful people in our community at the time when you came, and can you recall -- what can you recall about them? And the second is, what are some of the anecdotes that you can recall (inaudible) in the Greek town during the initial time of your arrival, as you witnessed it? And tell us what you can recollect throughout your 45 years of Saint Nick was the most humanistic way to show the life of the community as it was lived at the beginning of your (inaudible) year to the present time?

FATHER ALOUPIS: That's a lot.

PETER MARQUEZ: But really, they're all intertwined.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Who were the most colorful people? Well, I think that the members of our parish council were a special group. I can think of the late Michael Pappas, and then we had Tom [Arjelis], who married Father's daughter. And I remember the [Mascalerises]. [Adam Adams] had passed on before I came, so I really had never had the honor of

meeting or working with him. And what I can recall about them, I think it comes in a special phrase. Motivation. I think that in their way, they all had one motive: the good of Saint Nicholas. (inaudible) And that I found most commendable, when one has this type of a motive or motivation, to be helpful, to improve, to make it more special.

PETER MARQUEZ: All right. Anecdotes, the Greek town in Newark during that initial time.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Well, my initial time, I think that slowly there was an exodus --

PETER MARQUEZ: At that time it started --

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- from Newark to the suburbs, the rise of suburbia. And again, I find this very, very commendable, that our families were trying to improve, and to leave one area that was very good to them and to go to another, and yet in time, this presents problems, because as one gets a little older, it's more convenient to go here rather than to go further away. The matter of convenience. And we have to be realistic, that this place, its role, one, the other. When we came here in '54, in New Jersey, we had 12 parishes, including Saint Nicholas, (inaudible). Now, we're more than double.

PETER MARQUEZ: We're close to 30.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Now, we're more than --

PETER MARQUEZ: In New Jersey, there's 30 right now?

FATHER ALOUPIS: The growth --

KIKI LAMBROSE: Right.

FATHER ALOUPIS: -- the exodus, whatever. And with Gus the other day, we sat down and took a little ratio and a little circle, and would you believe, in about half an hour, give or take, you can almost go to 11 Greek Orthodox churches? In the Midwest, there's one Greek church for miles and miles. Here, within half an hour driving --

PETER MARQUEZ: (inaudible) population.

FATHER ALOUPIS: It's a big difference. And I think that in time, this also has left a weak spot.

KIKI LAMBROSE: It definitely has left its mark.

PETER MARQUEZ: One thing I just want to add, Father, is that being, you know, baptized in Saint Nicholas, married in Saint Nicholas, and my children were baptized, and so Saint Nicholas is the mother church, and what we said is the [cycles] of Saint Nicholas are the ones that go out to the other churches and become very active parish members, council members, (inaudible) members, and the -- it all

started from Saint Nicholas, another church. And you should be commended, and Father [Spirakis] should be commended, and Father [Lucas], you followed him, as you said.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Father Spirakis.

PETER MARQUEZ: And Father Lucas. And Father Lucas, your disciples are out there.

FATHER ALOUPIS: All right.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Perhaps Father would like to take a moment to look at some of these and maybe right down --

PETER MARQUEZ: (inaudible)

FATHER ALOUPIS: Coming to the last one, I think that one word describes the first, the beginning, and the continuing (inaudible). This is what we've had today, for example, the couple that was here leaving for Greece tonight. I had never seen the young lady until today. Peter [Foukas], I knew. In fact, I met him when he was a day and a half old in the maternity ward. So we tried to show respect for this man. Before they left, she came to tell me, I've never felt more love (inaudible) church as I did today. I said, I thank you for that. I appreciate that. We took them inside, in the church, we gave them two candles, they lit, we had a prayer. I told them to keep the candles in times of whatever in their personal life, anniversaries, feast

days, whatever, whatever. Light it, have your little prayer; put it out until the next time. I gave them (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). We're talking family, right? We do a lot of this. And to tell me the way she felt, and naturally, it pleased us.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Father --

FATHER ALOUPIS: Instead of leaving -- instead of leaving with other negative thoughts. Yes, dear?

KIKI LAMBROSE: I'd like you to tell the story of the day of the riots in Newark, when you were down here. I want you to tell that story.

FATHER ALOUPIS: You want to hear it again?

KIKI LAMBROSE: Yes, I do.

PETER MARQUEZ: I've never heard it, so I want to hear it.

FATHER ALOUPIS: All right. But I'm concerned -- I'll tell you, but I'm concerned about your schedule.

PETER MARQUEZ: Don't worry about our schedule. We have plenty of time.

FATHER ALOUPIS: All right. Now, we're going back to the Dark Ages. And during the Dark Ages, Father will tell you, my colleagues were calling me Jungle Jim, because of our neighborhood. I'm Jungle Jim. I would take it with a

smile. When you show someone -- I don't have to tell you -- that you're hurt because of a word or an action, some of them will keep on harping. You see? I smiled; I said, "I am, but they are wonderful people." They were expecting me with other. The Dark Ages, the riots. All of the activity in front of Saint Nicholas. The gunshots; there were gunshots coming by Saint Nicholas. Now, maybe I was foolish. I did it, so I'm foolish. But I -- on a Sunday, at the height of the riots, they're having the biggest parade that you can imagine. Waves and waves of people marching on High Street, all the way down (inaudible). Sunday, the word got around, my parish council. Father, (inaudible). I said to myself, all of these years, I had been talking because I believed the word (inaudible). I said, is it worth anything? (inaudible). So what I did, maybe foolish, everybody left. Everybody, you've never seen a quicker exit. Now, I'm here. I won't say all alone; we're never all alone. I put on my (inaudible), I open all of the doors, (inaudible), all the windows, everything wide open. And what do I do, foolishly? I'm the one man [reviewing stand]. I'm outside now, in front of Saint Nicholas. The parade starts. I've never seen so many people. And then they've got two official cars with policeman in the middle. They're coming, and then I see the

two cars and the police stop in front of Saint Nicholas. They stop, so there I am, smiling nice. I hear through the megaphone, "Good Father, offer your prayer. We need it." So they brought the megaphones over, God help me, I offered a prayer. People are coming. And then they decide to come into the church, like I've told you, like Radio City, the Christmas show, the Easter show, lines, but very orderly. Very orderly. They came in; they went around inside the church, not touching anything, not breaking, not even a window, the truth. Endless, endless. When they finally finished, two men came up to me. Now, they didn't tell me who they were, but they said, "Father, we want your reaction right now. How do you feel?" So I looked at them, I smiled, and I said, "You know," -- now, what prompted me to say this? -- I said, "You know, I feel like Nathan Hale, how they're looking at me." I said, "I have one regret." I said, "If I had known that we would have been honored, and that we would have been privileged to have all of these people in church, I would have had my ladies make Greek pasty (inaudible)." I did, I've got it on -- now, they're looking at me, and one says to the other, "You know, he really means it." I said, "Of course I mean it. What an honor to have all of these people come in and not to have some Greek hospitality." Well, they never told me, but the

next day, Kiki remembers, they were reporters from the New York Times. And would you believe, on the front page, "Greek priest laments no coffee for the people."

KIKI LAMBROSE: Do you have that article, Father?

FATHER ALOUPIS: No.

PETER MARQUEZ: (inaudible)

FATHER ALOUPIS: Only to say, we're talking family, maybe someone can say, "Father, you were foolish." Maybe someone with a gun -- no, you know, you never know.

KIKI LAMBROSE: No, you never know, Father. And I answered, I said, "Something told me to do that, and I wanted to know, is it worth it, or am I fooling myself?" But I want to tell you, they didn't touch anything, they didn't take anything, they didn't break anything. But we had so many people coming around inside Saint Nick's.

PETER MARQUEZ: (inaudible), that was a very, very good anecdote.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Another moment.

PETER MARQUEZ: That was a very good moment.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Another moment.

FATHER GEORGE: Father, I know you -- I can understand, and it is something that unless you're a priest you don't really understand too well that there are times when something

inside of you tells you to do something and you do it and it comes out well, because that insight was not from your own doing, it was from the Lord himself, it was from a higher being, and you do it and you feel good about it, and it kind of works out. And all the odds are against you when you're doing it, and yet it does work out, and this happened to me also, in my short time as a priest.

PETER MARQUEZ: It's happened to me and I'm not a priest; I think it happens to a lot of people.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Yeah, it happens to all of it.

PETER MARQUEZ: I think it happens to anyone who believes.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Do we have any more questions, or --?

FATHER GEORGE: Father, I'd like to thank you. I would like you first of all to take this, and anything you can think of further, why don't you just jot it down for us? And then give it to one of us and we'll add it to it.

PETER MARQUEZ: One more thing I'd like to add, and I think you touched on it, if there's any articles or clippings, we'll make photocopies and give it back to you. Like you said, this article that was in the New York Times -- I mean, we can always call the newspaper, but if you have it, at least we have the date, we can call them up and say we would like

to have a copy of that article. So I'm sure you have a lot of articles.

KIKI LAMBROSE: And your commendations, letters, if you could give us copies, because you've done so many things. How were you involved with the Boys and Girls Club?

FATHER ALOUPIS: Oh, through [Dave Warner], he was the founder of the Boys Clubs. And in the beginning, Peter might remember a little of this with Mike, Mike (inaudible). At first, he would invite all of the young people into his house. He had a beautiful home in [Weedwig]. And slowly, slowly, the idea came across that we should have -- these are not Boy Scouts. These are the Boys Clubs and the Girls Clubs of America. So thanks to Dave Warner, and I became very close with Dave through Mike --

PETER MARQUEZ: And Mike was our -- we also had a basketball tournament one time at the Boys Club.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes, yes. And with David Warner, we're going back now, we would have meetings about the Boys Clubs, the Girls Clubs. And at that time -- it's a small world -- [Sharp James] was the youngest member of the municipal committee, he was the youngest member, and he would help Dave, they were very close. He liked the Boys Clubs. And in time, this began to grow, to mushroom, in a very big way.

And on one occasion, they were to honor David Warner in the new section with a playground named in his honor, and Sharp and I were invited, I was going to have the opening prayer, and Sharp was representing the city of Newark. So we went, there was a picture taken, Sharp and I in the Star Ledger, way back. So I've gotten to know our mayor years ago, when he was a very, very young man. So one helps the other.

FATHER GEORGE: There's a footnote, he's a graduate of Central.

PETER MARQUEZ: (inaudible)

FATHER GEORGE: And a classmate of [Matina] and [Tanakis].

PETER MARQUEZ: Yeah, he's a good guy.

FATHER ALOUPIS: Yes.

KIKI LAMBROSE: Do you have a question?

PETER MARQUEZ: No, just that if Father can give us all of these wonderful articles, and like you said also, any citations that you've had and awards, we'll make copies and give them back to you, because it's history, it's something that we should definitely have in this project. We want to share this with others.

FATHER GEORGE: Father, thank you very much on behalf of all of us. (inaudible), and God bless you, and those three words

under there really, really describes you. Axios, axios, axios.

PETER MARQUEZ: Thanks, Father.

FATHER ALOUPIS: No, I'm very fortunate to have all of you.

PETER MARQUEZ: You're unique, Father.

FATHER ALOUPIS: I'm the lucky one.

PETER MARQUEZ: You are unique. We're very fortunately.

FATHER ALOUPIS: And [Sherry Caladis] had written a nice article, too --

End - Reverend James A. Aloupis (cassette)